

Cyclosporiasis

What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a parasite composed of one cell, too small to be seen without a microscope. The parasite causes an intestinal infection called cyclosporiasis.

How is cyclosporiasis spread?

Cyclospora is spread by people ingesting something, such as food or water, which was contaminated with feces. It is unlikely that *Cyclospora* is passed directly from one person to another because it takes time (days or weeks) to become infectious after being passed in a bowel movement.

Who is at risk of cyclosporiasis?

People of all ages are at risk for infection. Persons living or traveling in tropical or subtropical regions may be at increased risk because cyclosporiasis is endemic in some developing countries. Foodborne outbreaks of cyclosporiasis in the United States and Canada have been linked to various types of imported fresh produce.

What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

The time between becoming infected and becoming sick is usually about 1 week. *Cyclospora* infects the small intestine and usually causes watery diarrhea, with frequent bowel movements. Other common symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps/pain, bloating, increased gas, nausea, and fatigue. Vomiting, body aches, headache, fever, and other flu-like symptoms may also be experienced. Some people who are infected with *Cyclospora* do not have any symptoms.

How is cyclosporiasis diagnosed?

Your health care provider will ask you to submit stool specimens to see if you are infected. Identification of this parasite in stool requires special laboratory tests that are not routinely done. Therefore, if indicated, your health care provider should specifically request testing for *Cyclospora*. In addition, your health care provider might have your stool checked for other organisms that can cause similar symptoms.

What is the treatment for cyclosporiasis?

The recommended treatment is a combination of two antibiotics, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (brand names: Bactrim, Septra, and Cotrim). People who have diarrhea should also rest and drink plenty of fluids.

Most people who have healthy immune systems will recover without treatment, although if not treated symptoms can last for several weeks to a month or more. Anti-diarrheal medicine may help reduce diarrhea, but a health care provider should be consulted before such medicine is taken. People who are in poor health or who have weakened immune systems may be at higher risk for more severe and prolonged illness.

Calhoun County Public Health Department

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How can cyclosporiasis be prevented?

Avoiding water or food that may be contaminated with stool may help prevent *Cyclospora* infection. People who have previously been infected with *Cyclospora* can become infected again.

How do I get more information on cyclosporiasis?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

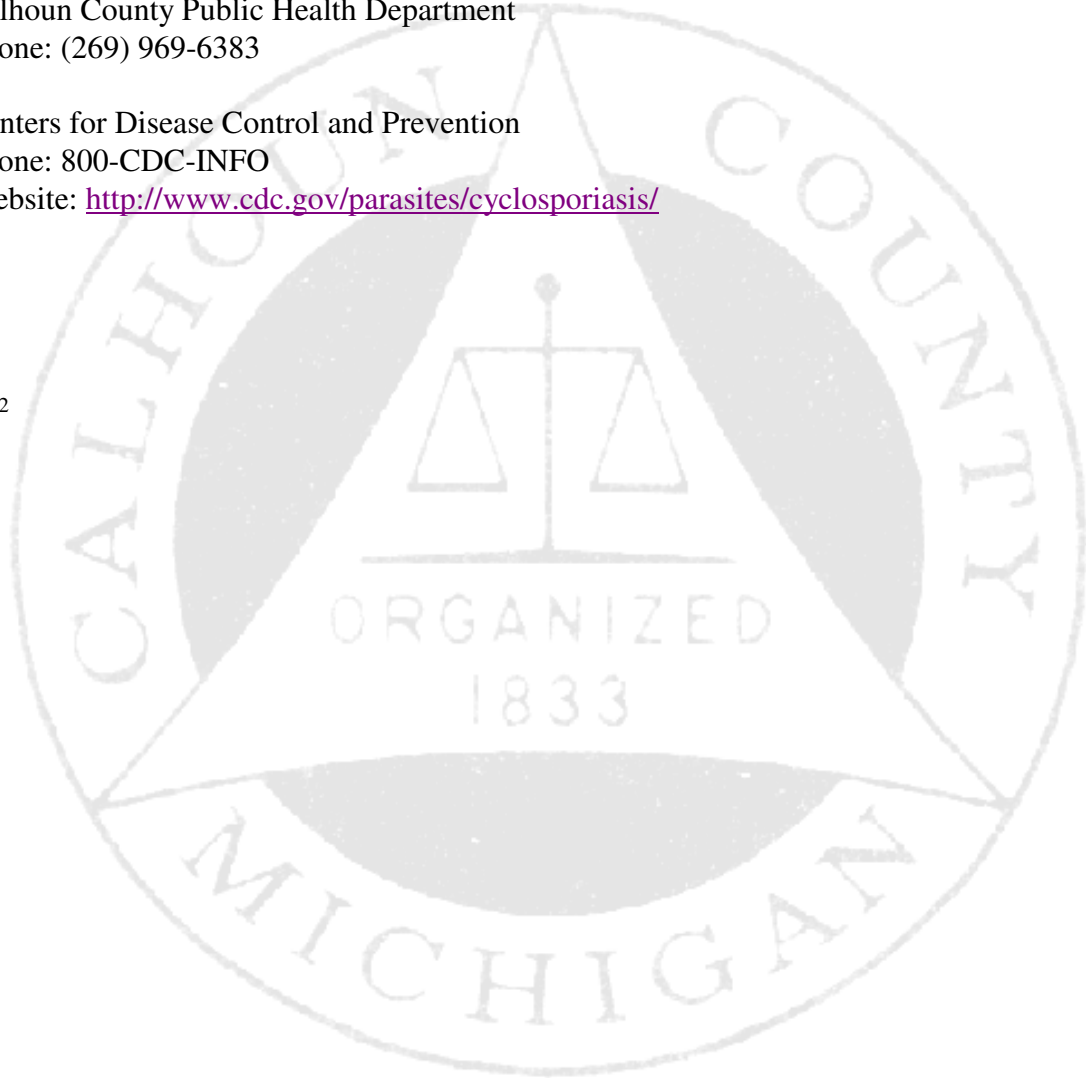
Phone: (269) 969-6383

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-CDC-INFO

Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/>

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

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